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WHERE ARE MY HORNS?

Adam Hamilton

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A QUESTION

FOR THE WISE AND FOOLISH.

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WHERE ARE MY HORNS?

THE DEVIL A SAINT.

MOST LIBERAL AND CHRISTIAN READER:

I, Lucifer, the archangel that was wont to sit upon the right hand of God, do now address thee, and crave thy attention to the following words in defence of myself and my mission upon earth.

With singular thoughtlessness and error, considering their gifts and opportunities, a vast number of people, of all nations and climes, to the manifest confusion of reason, persist in identifying me with the direful spectres which were born of the ignorance and fear of primeval man. They still call me great serpent, archfiend, dragon, Belial,

a horned, cloven-footed beast, and unctiously dwell upon these names; intimating thereby that I alone am the author of all the miseries which their own wickedness has brought upon them; that if I would only die tomorrow, they would then be saints, no matter how great their violations of nature's law to-day. Now, this misunderstanding of my character was not unexpected by me, the Deity himself having forewarned me of it long before I, at his request, left my seat in the celestial congress, and descended upon the Earth for the benefit of man. But what need I care, I who have occupied so high a position in the divine favor, for the praise or blame of the ignorant and rude, the enlightened reader may well inquire. Nothing, absolutely nothing, permit me to respond. I regard their opinion of me merely as a sign of their growth in the knowledge of good and evil, which it has been my mis-

sion to promote from the beginning of time. Like the star-crowned night, great in my darkness, I bestow my favor upon all alike, indifferent to the comments of both poet and boor. Therefore I bear thee no malice, Christian friend, for all the ill thou hast been pleased to say of me; I impute it to the ignorance which is a necessary but transient condition of thy being. In this respect, the Deity and I are of one accord, however much thy understanding of Jewish history may allege to the contrary. To be misunderstood, to be persecuted and reviled, means to be great and good, as may testify the lives of all the heroes of thy race, of its redeemers from the bondage in which it has been held by Superstition and Sin.

Thou wilt doubtless wonder, and be moved unto laughter or tears, at the presumption I appear to manifest in thus attempting, in the

face of thy beloved Orthodoxy, to deny the guilt which thou canst not disconnect from my name, without being deemed a heretic or infidel vile. According to the best of thy belief, I must go on from infamy to infamy, and side with folly and vice unto mine own eternal confusion, as the punishment of my first crime, viz., the ambition that led to the disturbance of the peace of Heaven. Oh, the cunning and cupidity of men in high position! How natural it was for kings and priests, and other privileged members of society, to dread the inconvenient ambition of their subordinates, and call in the aid of Superstition to repress it! Thus dissent from the established Authority, no matter how just and reasonable, has been denounced by them as the worst of crimes, — the crime of the Archfiend himself, whose deplorable fate is a warning to all who would fain follow his example, and aspire to

the liberty which is above their condition. Positively it is too bad. Heaven might have been a little more indulgent to me,*—not even a bottom to the pit into which I am to be finally pitched. How much more merciful Jupiter than Jehovah! Prometheus was vouchsafed vultures for his torment, but I, poor Devil, am doomed to torment myself, to nourish within mine own bosom a never-dying worm. Oh, Superstition, Superstition, cries the ardent son of Reason, how long art thou, under thy assumed names of Orthodoxy and Catholicism, to trample upon the liberties of my race, thou friend of the tyrant and the charlatan, and upholder of what thou callest their divine rights? And he gets no reply.

But I am inclined to treat the perversion of the facts of my early history with more indulgence than the unreasonable

* This caused great merriment in those highest celestial circles, at my expense.

accusation that I am to blame for all the ills of life and none of its benefits. What a singular being I would be, if one tithe of the stories afloat about me were true! The general impression is, that I exist only in order to tempt the unwary into my power, and torment them afterwards, either to gratify an unnatural taste for suffering, or on account of a certain grudge that I owe the Almighty. How depraved the imagination must have been to devise so vile a fable! To those conversant with my real object in existence, it would not seem more absurd, if one accused Plato or Paul with exerting themselves to catch flies for the pleasure of spearing them with red-hot needles.

The ancient heathens, in their speculations concerning my character, were far more intelligent than modern Christians. The former, with remarkable insight into the

nature of things, called me God, a dark one it is true, but not necessarily bad on that account. Pluto, not even the most bigoted can deny, was a hero compared with the scurvy Devil of the present day, who, by the way, if Christians are so totally depraved* as they call themselves, must have considerable leisure to gratify his infernal tastes.

It is true, I frankly admit, that, in so far as I represent the Power of Evil according to popular understanding thereof, I am not termed the Devil without justice. But the error is here. I am said to be evil for the sake of evil itself, with no regard whatever to the goodness which all evil eventually brings to pass. Mephistopheles is an excellent representative of this character. But he, of all Devils, both ancient and modern, next to Belial and Beelzebub, is the one whom I

* You cannot spoil a bad egg.

least resemble. He claims to be part of the power which invariably doth good in spite of its constant endeavors to do evil, while I claim to be of the power which is obliged to do evil in its constant efforts to do good. My peculiar element is the same as his, viz., sin, ruin, death; but, mark thou, this element is mine only, in so far as it serves the cause of its opposite, virtue, life, happiness. Mephistopheles would sink the ship because it is sound and good; I, because it is no longer safe [illegible] seaworthy. He is destructive out of spite to goodness in general; I am so from a sense of duty. My experience with Job sufficed, if I ever needed the admonition, to assure me that evil cannot prevail against the good, that temptation to them is a test only serving to reveal the purity of the metal of which they have been made. If Mephistopheles had known better, he would not have meddled with

Faust. Unsuccessful sin is the meanest thing in the world.

My real character is not unknown to the thinker, who, although appearances are against me, does not hesitate to call good, because goodness is dependent upon me for its being, precisely as light is upon darkness. It is impossible to conceive of the one without the other. Being necessary, then, to goodness, must not I too be good? But I need not dwell upon this metaphysical argument in my favor; should, however, the reader fail to understand it, I refer him to a more popular exponent* of the new philosophy, for a more comprehensive statement of the matter.

I never have been in favor of self-praise, but here I trust the reader will find it pardonable, considering how few friends I have to advocate my cause. Accordingly, however egotistical, vile, or

* Hegel.

villanous the vulgar call me, I do not hesitate to declare myself a wise and beneficent being in my peculiar sphere of action. The Bible itself verifies my claims. How necessary I was to exhibit Job in his true character, in order that the world might be benefited by so glorious an example of patience; and how useful I became in the Christian scheme of salvation, inasmuch as I was selected to tempt Jesus of Nazareth into celebrity, and get Judas Iscariot to betray him for thirty pieces of silver. The Church militant will surely acknowledge my services here, even if she denies them everywhere else. But, alas! neither I nor any other supernatural being can depend upon her for candor. Before deciding any important question, such as those of the infallibility of popes, the deification of virgins, vicarious atonements, miracles, etc., she makes a point of placing her conscience

in the care of St. Peter or St. Paul, as if she deemed her rationalistic opponents spiritual thieves. I know her of old; she has stolen the theology of the Jews, and after adulterating it with various paganisms vaunted it as an original commodity. She seems to have forgotten the adage, "Ill got, ill gone." Her members still divide and subdivide into different parties, and fight with one another, over the *articles* of the plunder, abusing, maiming, and even murdering one another, in order to obtain the precedence. I, to speak in a human manner, am sorry that I have had so large a share in ecclesiastical strife, and would willingly give it up now, if the Deity so decreed. But I as well as man must conform to the Divine Will in all things, even unto the perpetuation of the most violent theological feuds, irrespective entirely of my private likes and dislikes. The cause of

truth demands the decay of all imperfect religious systems, and I am delighted to insure it; for the loss of the one is the gain of the other. The trials of men, according to some divines, are the angels of God, and am I not an intimate associate of those angels? Why, then, am I not numbered in the holy throng? How can people deem me so great an exception to the rule? Oh, the stupidity of man! Without me he had never eaten the bright fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil, and consequently failed to become the progressive being he now is. Without me he were still the unconscious animal which he was in the beginning. And yet he will not recognize how long-suffering and patient I have shown myself in promoting him from stage to stage of his eventful career. To him I still seem an arbitrary and capricious monster, tempting and tormenting every one at random,

and chuckling over my paltry successes, like a small author, politician, or trader. He cannot see in me the never-failing avenger, whose mission it is to intensify iniquity for the speedier destruction of the same. But why intensify it rather than nip it in the bud, the reader stops to inquire. *Similia similibus curantur*, I answer. Evil is generally overcome by its own vileness. The consequences of vice make many virtuous, in spite of themselves. The more hurtful the fire, the greater the effort to put it out.

Like many things in this world, in order to be thoroughly understood, I must be viewed from two points, — from the individual or separate view, and from the whole or universal view. From the former, I must say I do not appear to advantage; in fact, I may as well give in, I appear wholly and insufferably bad. But, mark you, I am not really so, no more than the oar, half-im-

mersed in the water, is bent. For the moment I am seen in my universal relations, my personality seems to fuse itself into that of the Deity. What is the difference between a visitation of the Devil and a visitation of Providence? A storm is hated and dreaded by the tourist and his family, but how welcome it is to the farmer and his parched fields. "It is an ill wind that blows nobody good." Every now and then Nature has, as it were, to wrench herself into order, when anything seems to go wrong in her economy; hence the earthquake, the tornado, and the storm. It is the same with the human race, as in the case of the religious wars, revolutions, rebellions, and every conceivable commotion in the communities of men. How they all tend to the progress and improvement of the race! and yet I am accused of being the prime mover in them all, for the mere pleas-

ure of tormenting a certain percentage of human souls in hell, out of spite to the God who banished me from the realms of light on account of my diabolical ambition. The human mind must be developed in every conceivable direction; hence the innumerable forms of disease, disaster, and death are there, to call forth the strength and energy required to obviate their causes The greater the dangers and obstacles to be overcome, the greater the bravery and perseverance required to overcome them, and these cannot be too urgently called for. The human race thrives better in comparatively barren and cold districts, where the price of living is the hardest work consistent with health.

Every great calamity has its use. The Cholera, for instance, is dreadful in the extreme. But how are certain people to realize their filthiness without his horrible

admonitions? Birds of a feather inevitably flock together. How clean the Cholera makes the streets, and what other delightful sanitary measures his greeting makes cities institute! Intemperance, too, is deplorable in itself, but his ravages bring people to their senses more rapidly than eloquence of all the pulpits in the world, and, inasmuch as it does so, is it not a good thing? As I have already said, I do not like self-praise; but, in this connection, I feel called upon to say, there is no person in the Universe who, considering his opportunities, has done more to make mankind realize the consequences of sin, than I, Devil though I be. Painful personal Experience is admitted by all to be the best teacher, even if his tuition is the most expensive. And has he not co-operated with me to the best of his ability? Were I not conscious of the amount of good I do together with him, I would die at

the aspect of the woe, of which I feel myself to be the partial cause. I am the faithful servant of a Higher Power, the sentinel, as it were, of the domains which are forbidden to his creatures; and although in the fulfilment of my duty I set the dogs upon intruders, I glory in the act, for I know it to be for their ultimate good. But I never proceed to extremities, without first giving the intruders a fair warning. Dyspepsia, for example, is the dog that watches the land of Gluttony. How he snarls and snaps and growls, and gently bites, before he springs upon him who has incurred his wrath. And so it is with all the others. Not before all warnings have proved unavailing, is the transgressor seriously mangled as an example to the million. But wherefore so many examples? Have you not been over-zealous in the discharge of your diabolical duties? the reader may

naturally inquire. Whereupon I answer: The number of examples are only in proportion to the ignorance and perversity which necessitate them. Besides, it is a law of nature that the many should suffer for the one, and *vice versa*. Look at the number of souls of all kinds which perish for the one that lives. Behold the battles of the trees, of the insects, of all the varied inhabitants of the land and sea, for life and a place to live in. Life seems to subsist only upon death, so great is the destruction which attends it. The weaker germs of all kinds die; and, in dying, give the survivors new life and health. The Many die that the One may live, — the plants as well as the planets, the individual man as well as the race to which he belongs. Each survives according to its native power. It has been truly said, "To them that have shall be given, and from

them that have not, even that which they have shall be taken away." The farmer takes the little his poorer fields produce, and gives unto his richer. Not only the land of the inferior races is taken away from them and given unto the superior, but their life also is a forfeit to their foes. The rich grow richer, the poor grow poorer, until "that which they have not," viz., their life, all that remains to them is taken away, and given unto the rich. The poorer seeds, in dying, help fertilize the soil for the better. It is even the same with the mustard seed, which heaven is said to be like, as with the acorns of the oak-forest; for the *one* that lives and attains a fair and flourishing growth, myriads perish. And is it not right that this should be, and good to know it? I smile, therefore, as the weak and unfaithful of all kinds come tumbling down into outer Darkness, and praise in my own way

the Wisdom which thus disposes of them. The Church has wofully erred in her theory of my advent into the practical world. She maintains, "I fell from Heaven, the victim of a mistaken ambition." But what can you expect from poor, insufficient human reason, as represented by infallible popes, and hireling priests and parsons? What a gross perversion of a great truth! Was it a crime, that I, once being next in power to the Supreme Being, should long for, and aspire to, a share in his omnipotence? Doubtless, at that time, I was already high enough in the social scale of Heaven to have satisfied the ambition of the Church herself, had she been placed in the same circumstances. But I thought differently, and consequently rendered her existence necessary. I was like a man of genius in want of an opportunity for the further display of his gifts. 'T is true, I might

have stayed and sung songs in Heaven, from everlasting to everlasting, with other happy angels, having no ambition beyond waving the chief orchestral wand upon which I remember Gabriel to have cast longing eyes. But I was made for better things, paradoxical as it may seem, and having since striven for them, I am now in a fair way to realize them.

The Most High, the pulpit will be astonished to hear, looked upon my ambition with great indulgence, notwithstanding the humiliations I seem to have suffered in this world, and could not help inspiring Milton, Goethe, and others to elevate my name a little from the disrepute into which it had been allowed to fall, for certain wise purposes. Heaven, permit me to assure you, is extremely fond of a self-reliant and independent spirit. She prefers a brave Turk to a cowardly Christian, as I can testify

from my intercourse with the damned. O, Lucifer, said the Deity to me, after my repeated endeavors to make myself equal with Him, verily thou hast dared much, and much shalt thou receive in good time. But thou wistest not yet the terrible conditions which thou must fulfil ere thou canst reach the glorious object of thy desires. To be like me, to be one with me in my omnipotence, it is first necessary for thee to serve me with all thy might in the manner which I shall dictate to thy conscience and reason alone. But for my sake I beg thee to be natural in thy obedience to my will, no matter how iniquitous thou appearest to some, for I cannot bear the forced and artificial airs of resignation for which a certain piety is remarkable. Descend, then, upon the Earth, that sickly looking little constellation on the extreme left, and put thyself into rapport with the order

that I have just established there. In regard to the creature which calleth itself man, thy mission shall be to teach it the fatal realities of darkness and sin by the very spectacle thereof, so that it shall fly therefrom in great dismay; and this thou shalt do, even if thou hast to destroy it in so doing. Thou wilt now find it a savage, and happy as such, content to grovel in the chaos out of which it is as yet scarcely evolved, — as is every other spark of the divine fire before it is blown into a flame by the breath of Knowledge. See, therefore, that it realizes what it is and what are its capacities, even at the expense of what it calleth its Eden, namely, its savage contentment and ease. Make it eat of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil, which it shall typify by my name and thine. Verily, thou shalt fare ill at the hand of mankind, — so ill that thou shalt

often cry aloud in the anguish of thy heart. But be comforted; I shall be with thee in the hour of affliction, doing through thee good which I were unable to do alone. And although in the eyes of the ignorant we shall seem at emnity with one another, we shall, nevertheless, be heartily in unison, forming a unity which shall be a mystery to all but the elect. And the greater the evil thou shalt do, the greater the good that shall be born thereof. Fare thee well, thy humility shall be thy exaltation.

I must apologize to my enlightened reader for being so anthropomorphic in my statements; for I as well as the Church, am obliged to be so, in order to adapt myself to the civilization which thinks there is no God or Devil, unless he appears in the form of a man. This piece of sincerity on my part ought to make me appear to better advantage than certain ecclesiastics. But what

can we expect from those who call themselves worms, miserable sinners, and the like, complimenting very poorly, as it seems to me, the Deity upon His noblest work, man.

I hardly think, however, as I return to myself, that I ought to be so critical, considering the bad repute I am in. For who will believe the Father of Lies, or even have the patience to hear a word in his defence? I must therefore adhere as closely as I can to palpable facts, and submit myself to the average intelligence, trusting to its further development for recognition, if I fail to receive it now. Thy God has given me a lesson in this respect. How many thousand years had to elapse before people learned to call him father. My sufferings have been so great for the final welfare of humanity, I have often compared myself with the so-called redeemer of men, Jesus of Nazareth.

But his sufferings were transient, while mine have been eternal. According to tradition, and to nothing else that I know of, he was the omnipotent God himself, incarnate for a season to redeem man from the consequences of original sin. If he was, there is no truth in the comparison which I have just suggested. For what merit is there — I follow the logic of story — in making a mistake, * in taking one's own time to rectify it, and only doing so for the sake of one's own glory? Dwell on this for a moment, and then return to me, the abused, the abased, the continually afflicted Devil, who, notwithstanding the trials, persecutions, and curses which have attended his career, persists in so tempering the Light of Perfection with darkness that one can bear it and live. For as night is necessary to make day possible, so am I,

* And it repented the Lord that he had made man upon earth, and it grieved him to the heart. *Gen.* vi. 6.

Evil itself personified, necessary for the being of Goodness; I am virtually the shady side of God, and yet I, who occupy so important a position in the divine economy, do not get a single word of praise or acknowledgment for my services, save from those who are ignorant of what they are doing!

Before I cease, dear reader, I must first tell thee of one or two of my methods of benefiting mankind. Be it, therefore, known that I am an artist, one, the One, who devotes himself exclusively to the painting and sculpture of the dark side of Life. I rejoice in the most horrible subjects, and in this respect I am the most faithful historical artist. My methods, however, may be different from those of most of my brethren in art. Enter my studio and observe for yourselves. Experience will unlock the door. Wickedness, you now

see, takes every conceivable form, and I portray in each. Look at the crudest and most tangible forms which it assumes, for instance, in the person of the tyrant, the drunkard, the glutton, the liar, and the thief —is it not enough to make you realize the value of virtue? And look, also, at the loathsome pictures of disease and misery which I am obliged to paint, as the consequence of its appearance in any form, whether crude or refined, tangible or intangible. There is a tradition to the effect that the devil marks his own, by the imprint of his finger upon the brow, as in the case of the Bostonian,* whom I am finally represented as carrying off to hell with great glee. Well so I do, but not only upon the brow do I mark them, but also on every part of the body, from the sole of the foot to the crown of the head, which I sometimes render prematurely bald, to indicate

* Thomas Walker.

intemperance in the family. All the homely features, the general ugliness of the person, the pot belly, the habitual frown, red nose, in short every deviation from the line and color of beauty is my mark, inasmuch as it indicates sin, and the surrender of the living soul into my hands for the punishment it deserves, and I glory in my art, — for how else can wickedness be counteracted save by the realization of its own vileness? Punishment's only object is to render itself superfluous. To this end I actually wield the pencil and chisel of Nature in the delineation of the horrible and detestable; and I praise, instead of reviling, as theologians maintain, the Providence that so commissioned me. No one, be he who he may, can depart a single hair's-breadth from the path of rectitude, or infringe, in the smallest degree, upon the laws of Nature, without being drawn by me in his sin, and in his degra-

dation. Who is not more or less marked like Cain, although the mark be hidden from the world? Who painted that clergyman's nose red, and sprinkled his face with pimples? I, — because he drinks too much wine, and eats as unctiously as he prays? What makes his sermons and his services so wondrously narcotic, that we all succumb to their soothing influence notwithstanding the discomfort of the old-fashioned pews? The pressure of my hand upon his brain, because he not only ate late suppers, but fatigued himself adapting himself to the fashionable society in which he lives, moves, and has his being. What makes that lady, who, were it not for her simpering vacancy, would be beautiful, appear so languid and insipid? My pencil, because she thinks more of flounces and courtship, than the virtues and graces which would make her bright and attractive. What makes those respect-

able members of society in yonder corner so dull and joyless in expression? The pressure of my hand upon their hearts, which have been hardened by Avarice. And before they know it, the fate of Midas is upon them; and the very weeds on their graves, long after they have been laid therein, whisper the story of their shame. But why must I say so much in explanation of my pictures? The object thereof is obvious; you will surely see it, if Vice has not already made you blind. O, victims of your vanities and follies, when will you cease to require the services of so dreadful an artist as I am, to portray you thus, first in the enjoyment of your petty indulgences, and then in the misery and destitution of soul consequent thereon. What, let me ask you, is the object of your existence? Is it base, bad, indifferent? If so, behold yourselves portrayed by me in the attainment of the

same, and in its consequences. But please yourselves; it will be all right in the end. Better men will be taught by your folly. I earnestly trust people shall soon see their mistake in submitting themselves to my art in so reckless a manner; indeed, I know they shall, for my supernatural exertions cannot be for naught. At present I only deplore the superstition which makes them afraid of my name, and yet so friendly to my art. They identify me with a host of purely mythical monsters, and will not pause for a moment to contemplate me as I am. At the very mention of my name they run panic-stricken, sometimes right into my arms, and do not know it, so great is the blindness of their pious fear. They are possessed by the apprehension that I shall devour them like a hungry lion, no matter whether they merit such a fate or not. They ignore the fact entirely that I only

come like the plague, to admonish them that it is high time to attend to the laws of health. Hence, failing to see the dark scenes which I paint for their benefit, they oblige me, by reason of their obstinate perversity, to exhibit them in an attitude and mien still more ridiculous than those in which I find them at first.

As yet, my friends, I have only spoken of myself as illustrated by a sentinel and artist, and not by a member of any other profession or calling, which task still remains for me to do, if I have not said enough to vindicate myself in my relations to both God and man. But come what may, it is all the same to me. Whatever is, is right.

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